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QUESTION OF CYPRUS

REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES, QUESTIONS RELATING TO REFUGEES, RETURNEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS AND HUMANITARIAN QUESTIONS

Letter dated 15 November 1996 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter dated 14 November 1996, addressed to you by His Excellency Mr. Osman Ertuğ, Representative of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex would be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 58 and 105.

(Signed) Hüseyin E. ÇELEM
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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ANNEX

Letter dated 14 November 1996 from Mr. Osman Ertuğ
addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to refer to the statement made by the Greek Cypriot delegate during the 23rd meeting of the Third Committee, on 4 November 1996, under agenda item 105, Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, questions relating to refugees and displaced persons and humanitarian questions (see A/C.3/51/SR.23). This statement contains allegations that grossly misrepresent and distort the realities of the Cyprus issue.

In his statement, the Greek Cypriot delegate, in an obvious attempt to cover up the Greek Cypriot side's exclusive responsibility for the existing division of the island, has once again described the legitimate military presence of a guarantor Power as an "occupation". In fact, the only occupation in Cyprus is the 33-year-old usurpation and continued occupation of the seat of government of the once bi-communal Republic of Cyprus by the Greek Cypriot side.

As regards the Greek Cypriot side's self-portrayal as the victimized party in the Cyprus question, I wish to underline that there is ample graphic evidence in the form of reports by the Secretary-General and the international press that during the years between 1963 and 1974 a systematic campaign of ethnic cleansing was directed by the Greek Cypriots against their former Turkish Cypriot partners in Cyprus. Turkish Cypriots were relieved of this agony and were saved from total extermination only by the timely intervention of Turkey on 20 July 1974, after the bloody attempt at the final takeover of Cyprus by Greece, through a coup d'état organized by the latter and its collaborators in Cyprus. Turkey's intervention was undertaken in accordance with its rights and obligations under the 1960 Treaty of Guarantee and was fully legal and legitimate. It is true, therefore, that there had been an invasion in Cyprus in 1974, but this was the "Greek invasion of Cyprus", as it was described by the Greek Cypriot side's own leader, Archbishop Makarios, in his speech before the Security Council on 19 July 1974 (see S/PV.1780).

The 11-year-long ethnic cleansing campaign of the Greek Cypriots, culminating in the coup d'état of 15 July 1974, had produced around 30,000 Turkish Cypriot refugees, one quarter of the entire Turkish Cypriot population at the time. During this period, Turkish Cypriots were effectively disenfranchised and forced to live in scattered enclaves under socio-economic siege. This is what the assessment of the Secretary-General was about, the plight of the Turkish Cypriot people in that tragic period, as stated in his report to the Security Council dated 10 September 1964 (S/5950, para. 222): "... The economic restrictions imposed against the Turkish communities in Cyprus, ... in some instances have been so severe as to amount to a veritable siege."

During the events of 1974 triggered by the coup d'état, 65,000 more Turkish Cypriots were displaced and sought refuge in the safety of the north. It was only then that the Greek Cypriots also became a party to the problem of displacement that had afflicted the Turkish Cypriots for 11 years, resulting in

nearly four fifths of the Turkish Cypriot population becoming refugees, some of them many times over.

The question of displaced persons has been fundamentally settled between the two sides through the agreement on the exchange of populations reached between the two sides at the third round of the intercommunal talks held at Vienna from 31 July and 2 August 1975, whereby the two sides agreed on a voluntary regrouping of populations, each in its own respective territory, the Turkish Cypriots in the north and the Greek Cypriots in the south (see S/11789 of 5 August 1975). The implementation of this agreement, which paved the way for a bizonal, bicommunal federal settlement of the Cyprus question, was carried out with the help of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) (see S/11789/Add.1 of 10 September 1975). The displaced persons on both sides have since been resettled and rehabilitated, each side tackling its own problem in this regard within its own territory.

In view of the foregoing, I wish to remind the Greek Cypriot side, once more, that any and all issues pertaining to the Cyprus question should be discussed at the intercommunal talks and not be turned into a tool for political posturing. The Greek Cypriot side should realize that playing the role of the victim in Cyprus is a short-sighted policy and that the solution of the Cyprus question lies at the negotiating table.

I should be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 58 and 105.

(Signed) Osman ERTUĞ
Representative
Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus